



2025 AGE DISPENSATION POLICY

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This document outlines NRL SA's policy on dispensation for a player to participate in an Age Group competition of a younger age than their nominal age group (i.e., play in competition below their own age), as determined in the NRL SA Age Group list.
- 1.2 This policy is applicable to all registered junior players under NRL SA and to any club (including affiliate clubs) affiliated to NRL SA.

2. Dispensation

- 2.1 Dispensation shall only be provided to play in the Age Group immediately below the nominal Age Group for that player.
- 2.2 Dispensation shall only be provided for the competition season that approval has been made. Dispensation shall be required to be applied for at the commencement of each competition season regardless of approved dispensation in previous seasons/years.
- 2.3 If a player is approved for Age Dispensation, the player can only play in that Age Group and not in their nominal Age Group as well. If a player is found to have done this both matches will be deemed a forfeit which shall then be subject to the terms of Forfeits under the NRL SA Competition Rules and Regulations.
- 2.4 Dispensation under this Policy shall **only** be provided to a player on the following basis:
 - (a) The player has a legitimate physical and/or intellectual disability; and
 - (b) The physical and/or intellectual disability has impacted on their physical and/or intellectual development relative to players of their own age; and
 - (c) Sufficient medical documentation supporting the player's application is provided.

OR

- (d) For tackle/contact competitions only, player's weight falls below Lower Weight Limit for their age based on approximate 25th percentile:

U7/8	21kg or under may play U6
U9/10	26kg or under may play U8
U11/12	33kg or under may play U10
U13/14	42kg or under may play U12
U15/16/17	53kg or under may play U14
U18	65kg or under may play U17



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- 2.5 Dispensation shall **NOT** be granted for the following:
- A player is physically smaller than the other players in their age group (unless qualifies under 2.4 [d] above)
 - A player who has been approved to play down an Age Group already under the [18 Month Registration Policy](#)
 - A player is new to the game
 - A player wants to play with friends in a lower age group
 - The club does not have a team or the league does not offer a competition for the nominal age group of that player
- 2.6 Any match where a player that plays at an Age Group below their nominal age group without having prior approval under the NRL SA Age Dispensation Policy will be automatically determined a Forfeit by that player's team which shall then be subject to the terms of Forfeits under the NRL SA Competition Rules and Regulations.
- 2.7 Dispensation may be withdrawn by NRL SA based on review of a player's capabilities having significant impact on the Age Group they have received Age Dispensation for.
- 3. Application Process for Age Dispensation**
- 3.1 The application for Age Dispensation must meet timelines as required under the NRL SA Competition Rules and Regulations, those being submission must be made by 5pm Wednesday before the next Scheduled Match otherwise they will not be processed for that immediate weekend under any circumstances.
- 3.2 The Age Dispensation Policy is to be initially administered by the club. However, final approval regarding the application of this policy will be provided by NRL SA.
- 3.3 A parent/guardian makes a request to the player's club seeking Age Dispensation for their child to play in a grade below their nominal Age Group.
- 3.4 The parent/guardian then completes the online "**Age Dispensation Application Form**" available on the NRL SA website.
- 3.5 If the application does not meet the requirements of this Policy, NRL SA will advise the parent/guardian and club of the decision and reason(s) as to why.
- 3.6 If the application does meet the requirements of this Policy, NRL SA will then review the submission and request any supporting documentation such as statement/verification of medical condition and recommendation from a doctor (or equivalent based on nature of physical/intellectual condition).
- 3.7 If after receiving any supporting documentation as may be required, and the application meets all relevant criteria for support, NRL SA will then forward to the club to make a decision to either deny or support the player's application for Age Dispensation based on the requirements of this Policy. NRL SA may also request that the player be sighted at training or other appropriate means to assess the application prior to approval.



- 3.8 If the club denies the request for Age Dispensation the club shall advise the parent/guardian and NRL SA of the decision and reason(s). NRL SA will update MySideline as appropriate indicating the decision and reason(s).
- 3.9 If the club supports the request for Age Dispensation the club will inform NRL SA who will in turn confirm in writing that the request has been approved and administer all MySideline requirements.
- 4. Appeal**
- 4.1 The Club and/or Parent/Guardian may appeal any decision made under 2.6 or 3.8 within 3 working days, and in this case the application is to be made to the Operations Manager who will present to the NRL SA Appeals Panel.
- 4.2 A player is **NOT** permitted to play in age group below their own nominal Age Group until the decision of NRL SA Appeals Panel is completed.
- 4.3 Any opposition club may appeal a player's Age Dispensation to the Operations Manager, providing appropriate evidence as to why, which if deemed satisfactory will be reviewed by the NRL VIC Appeals Panel. A player can remain playing in the Age Group they have Age Dispensation for until the review is completed.
- 5. Approvals**
- 5.1 If an application under this policy is approved for Age Dispensation, NRL SA will advise the Club in writing of approval and update MySideline as required.